

What is claimed is:

generating workstation security credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network;

authorizing access to the network service by the workstation if  
15 the workstation security credentials satisfy the workstation security policy, otherwise  
denying access to the network service by the workstation.

2. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 1 further comprising the step of authorizing access to a predetermined level of the network service if the workstation security credentials satisfy a portion of the workstation security policy.

3. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 1, wherein the step of generating the workstation security credentials comprises completing the vulnerability assessment of the workstation by a local workstation assessment service maintained on the workstation, the local workstation assessment service operative to generate the workstation security credentials.

4. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 3,  
30 wherein the workstation security policy is maintained on the workstation, the process  
further comprising the step of providing the workstation security credentials from the  
local workstation assessment service to the workstation security policy.

5. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 1, wherein the step of generating the workstation security credentials comprises completing the vulnerability assessment of the workstation by a network workstation assessment service maintained on the network server, the network workstation  
5 assessment service operative to generate the workstation security credentials.

6. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 5, wherein the workstation security policy is maintained on the workstation, the process further comprising the step of providing the workstation security credentials from the  
10 network workstation assessment service to the workstation security policy on the workstation via the computer network.

7. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 1, wherein the step of generating the workstation security credentials comprises  
15 completing the vulnerability assessment of the workstation by a network workstation assessment service maintained on an assessment server coupled to the computer network, the assessment server operating as a remote server different from the network server, the network workstation assessment service operative to generate the workstation security credentials.

8. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 7, wherein the workstation security policy is maintained on the network server, the process further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the workstation security credentials from the  
25 network workstation assessment service on the assessment server to the network service on the network server via the computer network; and

comparing at the network server the workstation security credentials to the workstation security policy to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the network service.

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12. A network security system for authenticating a workstation requesting a network service from a network server via a computer network, comprising:

5 a local workstation assessment service, operative on the workstation, for generating workstation security credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network; and

10 a workstation security policy, operative on the workstation, for defining security policy requirements for secure operations by the workstation;

the local workstation assessment service further operative for comparing the workstation security credentials to the workstation security policy to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the network service,

15 the local workstation assessment service further operative to authorize access to the network service by the workstation if the workstation security credentials satisfy the workstation security policy.

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5                   a local workstation assessment service, operative on the workstation, for generating workstation security credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network; and

14. The network security system recited by Claim 13 further  
15 comprising a workstation security policy at the network server, the workstation  
security policy operative to define security requirements for secure operation of the  
workstation on the computer network.

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the network service operative to generate workstation security  
5 credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify  
security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the  
workstation on the computer network;

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issuing a request for a log-in page to a network server from a  
5 browser operating on the workstation;

transmitting the workstation security credentials from the authentication plug-in to the network server via the computer network; and

20. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 19 wherein the step of determining whether the workstation should be granted access to the software service comprises the step of the CGI script comparing the workstation security credentials to a workstation security policy maintained at the network server to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the software service;

otherwise, denying access to the software service and delivering an access denied page to the workstation via the computer network.

5 a network assessment service operating on a network workstation assessment server on the computer network, the network assessment service operative to generate workstation security credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation via the computer network to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network.

15                    22. The network security system recited by Claim 21 further comprising a workstation security policy at the network server, the workstation security policy operative to define security requirements for secure operation of the workstation on the computer network.

24. The network security system recited by Claim 21, wherein the network service is operative to transmit to the network assessment service via the computer network a request to complete the vulnerability assessment of the workstation in response to receiving a request for the software service from the workstation.



issuing a request for a log-in page to a network server from a  
5 browser operating on the workstation;

comparing the workstation security credentials to the workstation policy on the workstation to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to a software service of the network.

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